

Promotion aims to encourage Utah travel despite roadwork delays

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Published: Sunday, May 16, 2010 12:13 a.m. MDT

This year, the Utah Department of Transportation is tackling more than 200 construction projects statewide, with 10 along I-15 alone. While these projects are important for Utah's future, short-term delays can create delays for travelers, especially during holiday weekends. That is why we are endorsing the department's efforts in working to help inform motorists, offer coping strategies and boost in-state travel.

The department has partnered with the Office of Tourism to provide the opportunity for lodging properties and other travel attractions around the state to offer discounts or incentives exclusively on the Thursday or Tuesday surrounding each holiday and/or on a Thursday or Sunday for any other weekend this summer.

The "Stay an Extra Day," promotion, which is available at travel.utah.gov and udot.utah.gov, was created to encourage a reduction of the number of vehicles traveling during peak travel times, as well as bolster in-state tourism. It creates a win-win situation in which businesses benefit from increased traffic and sales while visitors take advantage of special offers and avoid travel delays.

Continued growth in the Beehive State necessitates improving and increasing the capacity of our roads to ensure the high quality of life we enjoy, fostering business development and accommodating the increasing number of tourists from throughout the state and around the world.

The "Stay an Extra Day" promotion is especially timely with the recent start of the I-15 Corridor Expansion Project in Utah County, the largest project in state history. The 24-mile I-15 project will be under construction around the clock through December 2012 and will add two additional travel lanes in both directions, extend the express lane from Orem to Spanish Fork and reconstruct or reconfigure 55 bridges and 10 interchanges.

While the transportation department is making efforts to minimize inconvenience to the traveling public, there will be periods with lane restrictions and probable significant delays. This will affect travelers from throughout the state.

We encourage Utahns to become informed about road construction projects on department's website (udot.utah.gov), plan ahead and take advantage of the "Stay an Extra Day" promotion to maximize their time and increasing their adventures in the greatest travel destination in the world.

Leigh von der Esch is the Managing Director of the Utah Office of Tourism. © 2010 Deseret News Publishing Company | All rights reserved